

Serial No. 09/995,971
Amendment Dated June 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2004
Page 13

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Minor typographical errors located in paragraphs 43 and 55 of the specification originally filed have been corrected. No new matter has been added.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3, 5-11, 14 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 102(c) as being anticipated by Kasiviswanathan in United States Patent No. 6,215,857. Applicant respectfully disagrees.

Kasiviswanathan teaches a system, method and apparatus for direct voice mail access and blocking. The direct voice mail access feature is activated by dialing a service code for direct voice mail access followed by the subscriber's telephone number. Feature initiation using service codes is old and well known in the art. If the calling party and the subscriber are not located on the same switch, the calling party switch checks whether there is an ISUP link between the calling party switch and the subscriber switch. If the link is available, the calling party switch sends a "Service Activation Parameter" within a "Feature Code" coded as a "DVMA request" in the Initial Address Message (IAM), along with other information, to the subscriber switch. Upon receiving the IAM, the subscriber switch processes the call normally, as is well known in the art, by ascertaining whether the subscriber has purchased a voice mail feature. If the subscriber has the voice mail feature, the VMA category 435 is set to "yes", and the subscriber switch changes the "Call Forwarding Don't Answer" feature, which routes the call to the called subscriber's voice mail system when the called subscriber does not answer the call to a "Call Forwarding Variable" feature. The Call Forwarding Variable feature routes the call directly to the called subscriber's voice mail box for this particular call. After changing the call forwarding category for the call, a call connection can then be established between the calling party and the subscriber. At seizure, the call encounters the Call Forwarding Variable feature and the call is forwarded to the subscriber's voice mail box within the

Serial No. 09/995,971
Amendment Dated June 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2004
Page 14

voice mail system without disturbing the subscriber. (Column 5, lines 36 – Column 6, line 7.)

Consequently, as will be understood by any person skilled in the art, Kasiviswanathan does not teach formulating a call setup message for initiating the establishment of a call connection to a voice mail system, the call setup message having a format reserved for a redirected call setup message issued by a Service Switching Point (SSP) in response to an uncompleted call to the service subscriber. As taught by Kasiviswanathan, the IAM simply includes a Service Activation Parameter with a Feature Code coded as a DVMA request. As would be understood by any person skilled in the art, this does not constitute a call setup message having a format reserved for a redirected call setup message issued by a Service Switching Point.

Furthermore, Kasiviswanathan does not teach establishing a call connection directly to the voice mail box of the service subscriber. Rather, Kasiviswanathan teaches that the call is forwarded to the service subscriber's line termination as any regular call. However, on each call occurrence, the service subscriber's switch changes the call forwarding category for the subscriber line, and a call connection is established between the calling party and the service subscriber after seizure of the subscriber line when the CFV feature is encountered.

However, applicant is desirous of unequivocally distinguishing over the prior art. Consequently, claims 1 and 6 are amended to claim that a call setup message is formulated for initiating the establishment of a call connection to the voice mail system without first attempting to complete the call to the service subscriber. Amended claims 1 and 6 therefore clearly and patentably distinguish over the teachings of Kasiviswanathan because, as explained above, Kasiviswanathan attempts to complete a call to the service subscriber before the call is forwarded to the voice mail system. The rejection of claims 1-3, 5-11, 14 and 15 is thereby traversed.

Serial No. 09/995,971
Amendment Dated June 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2004
Page 15

Claim Rejections – 35 USC § 103

The Office Action rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kasiviswanathan in view of Weller et al in United States Patent No. 6,266,399.

Weller et al teach outgoing message selection based on caller identification and time/date constraints. A plurality of outgoing messages to be played to calling parties are stored. Caller identifications are associated with the respective outgoing messages. Upon receipt of a call from a caller, passive identification of the caller is performed in order to determine if an identity of the caller matches any of the stored caller identifications. If an identity of the caller matches one of the stored caller identifications, the corresponding outgoing message is played to the caller. Contrary to the position expressed in the Office Action, Weller et al. fail to teach or suggest a redirecting reason code inserted into a redirection information parameter of a SS7 message.

No combination of Weller et al. and Kasiviswanathan teaches the invention claimed in claim 4 and the rejection of claim 4 is thereby traversed.

The Office Action rejected claims 12 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kasiviswanathan in view of Hyde-Thomson in United States Patent No. 5,557,659.

Hyde-Thomson teaches an electronic mail system having integrated voice messages. A voice message is input either through a phone associated with a computer terminal or via a remote phone. The voice message is converted into a digital voice file that is stored on a shared memory device corresponding to an intended recipient's mail box. Thereby, one mail box can contain both voice and text messages. The same message handling mechanism is used for handling both voice and text messages. A list of the message currently stored for each mail box can be pulled for display by their respective terminals. A selected voice message may be selected for playback over the phone. Likewise, a text message may be selected for display by the terminal. Call answering and remote playback functions are also provided.

Serial No. 09/995,971
 Amendment Dated June 29, 2004
 Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2004
 Page 16

The Office Action acknowledges that Kasiviswanathan fails to teach that the receiving step is performed over an Internet Protocol (IP) connection from a server on the Internet adapted to receive click-to-voice mail notifications from at least one worldwide web page. The Office Action takes Official Notice that this limitation is both old and well known in the art. Applicant emphatically disagrees. To the best of applicant's knowledge, click-to-voice mail was not disclosed by any other party prior to the filing of the instant application.

What Hyde-Thomson describes in column 17 is a method for recording a voice message that is sent as a data file via an electronic mail function. No access is provided to the subscriber's voice mail box. After receiving a voice message sent by electronic mail, the recipient may use a point-and-click on any of the voice messages or icons for playback of the message (column 17, lines 48-51). However, this has nothing to do with the functionality claimed in claims 12 and 13 and the rejection of those claims is traversed.

New claims 41-65 are added to this application. New claims 41-65 replace claims 16-40 cancelled by applicant's preliminary amendment filed July 14, 2003. Consequently, no excess claim fees are payable.

New independent claim 41 teaches a method of providing direct access to a voice mail box of a service subscriber to a voice mail system in a switched telephone network, comprising a step of providing a click-to-voice mail option on one of a web page and an electronic mail message to permit a requesting party to request a call connection to the service subscriber's voice mail box without first attempting to complete a call to the service subscriber. For reasons set forth above in detail, such a method is neither taught nor suggested in any prior art known to the applicant.

New independent claim 52 claims a method of providing direct access to a voice mail box of a service subscriber to a voice mail system in a switched telephone network, comprising a step of providing a directory service that permits a requesting party to request a direct call connection to the service subscriber's voice mail box without first attempting to complete a call to the service subscriber. Likewise, for reasons set forth

Serial No. 09/995,971
Amendment Dated June 29, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 31, 2004
Page 17

above in detail, no prior art known to the applicant teaches or suggests a method as claimed in new independent claim 52.

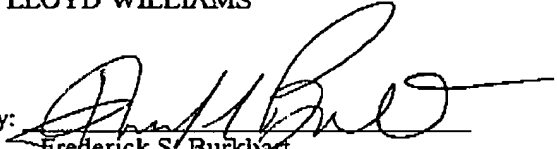
In view of the amendments to independent claims 1 and 6, and for reasons set forth above in detail, claims 1-15 and 41-65 pending in this application are considered to be in a condition for immediate allowance. Favorable reconsideration and early issuance of a Notice of Allowance are therefore requested.

Respectfully submitted,

L. LLOYD WILLIAMS

Dated: June 29, 2004.

By:


Frederick S. Burkhardt
Registration No. 29 288
Attorney for Applicant

Address:

VAN DYKE GARDNER LINN & BURKHART, LLP
2851 Charlevoix Drive S.E., Suite 207
P.O. Box 888695
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49588-8695, USA
Telephone No.: 616-988-4104